

Aug.28/17



Dear Premier John Horgan and Andrew Weaver,

It is now crucial to take a strong stand to champion the welfare of wild salmon and its habitat by removing open net pen fish farms from the Pacific coast, starting with one third of those illegally sited in Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw unceded territory. The reasons are clear and sound, it is impossible for fish farms to control illegal by-catch in their open net pens; it is impossible to control the diseases, viruses and parasites flowing out the fish farms that harm wild salmon, herring, capelin and clams. The toxic waste flowing out of those pens are polluting the marine habitat of wild fisheries. This all results in violations of federal regulations that dis-allow illegal by-catch that become food for farmed salmon, as well as regulations that require farmed Atlantic salmon be tested for pathogens like the highly contagious piscine reovirus before they are placed in Pacific waters. Unfortunately, Minister Dominic LeBlanc at the federal level is aligning himself with Marine Harvest to challenge a court decision that requires the prior testing of farmed salmon for lethal pathogens before deciding to place them in the Pacific Ocean.

Very importantly, the fish farms do not have the prior, free and informed consent of Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw people to have them in their territorial waters, some know as the Broughton Archipelago. This is a violation of their Indigenous rights and title to their territory and resources. Please watch the videos and messages on the following website for more information: <https://www.facebook.com/SeaShepherdMartinSheen/>.

The evidence the people have is undeniable that fish farms are causing more than serious harm to wild salmon. We are urging you to meet face-to-face with Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw, Namgis, Kwakwaka'wakw people to discuss why it is imperative that fish farms be removed from their territory. They have rights and title that need to be honoured and river First Nations support them because they are protecting what sustains us all. We are all connected to the wild salmon. This would be a most meaningful step towards reconciliation with Indigenous people who oppose fish farms. This would honour Justice Cohen's recommendation that, if fish farms are found to do more than minimal harm, they must be removed from the migration routes of Fraser river wild salmon. We now have persuasive evidence that does not require millions of dollars of more research - fish farms harm wild salmon and degrade its habitat. A sensible way forward is to move them onto land in containment as Namgis First Nation is doing.

In summary, we are urgently asking you to publically announce that you will not renew licenses of occupation of fish farms in Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw territory. This situation warrants your immediate time, energy and attention. We look forward to your response soon.

Eddie Gardner
Skwah First Nation & President of Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance